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ABSTRACT

Reporting on actions taken in response to 1978-79 state legislative mandates re: Texas public school curriculum, this paper presents representative rural small school curriculum development activities. Specifically, the following are addressed: results of the Texas Assessment Project (TAP); support units; programs for the gifted and talented; state funded programs; programs providing occupational education; Title IV-C programs; and miscellaneous programs. Examples of the more salient 1979-80 data presented include the following: since TAP found suburban students superior to urban and rural students in reading, composition, math, and citizenship, reading and math were given priority attention by approximately 95% of the small rural school districts; 13 Education Service Centers (ESC) operated career education cooperatives serving 229 small rural school districts; the additional .6 personnel units alloted small rural school districts (to be used cooperatively with other districts) resulted in 607 districts receiving additional services; the initiation of talented youth seminars resulted in service to approximately 75 school districts; state funded programs for the gifted and talented numbered 6; emphasis on occupational education resulted in 204 school districts sending students to 86 other institutions and initiation of 11 projects directly affecting small rural school districts; and Title IV-C emphasis included funding of 6 proposals from small rural schools and 94 from ESC's. (JC)

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A DESCRIPTION OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS RELATED TO SMALL/RURAL SCHOOLS IN TEXAS

1979-80

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A DESCRIPTION OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO SMALL/RURAL SCHOOLS IN TEXAS

The Sixty-sixth Legislature, through the enactment of HCR 90, charged the State Board of Education (SBOE) to undertake a statewide study of the curriculum in Texas public schools. This paper describes some of the better known curriculum development activities and problems related to small/rural schools in Texas during 1979-80. Those activities described herein are intended to be representative of small/rural school curriculum development efforts rather than a complete listing. For purposes of this paper, a small or rural school is defined to be a school district having fewer than 1,000 ADA.

Results of the Texas Assessment Project

During the 1977-78 school year, the Texas Assessment Project (TAP) assessed student learning in reading, writing (composition), mathematics and citizenship. The results of this Project revealed that students from rural and urban school districts performed less well than students from suburban districts in these curriculum areas. Consequently, reading and mathematics were addressed as priority areas by approximately 95% of small/rural school districts in accreditation Cycles B and C.

Phase II of the Texas Assessment Project was conducted by the TEA during 1978-79. This phase of TAP was designed to measure student achievement in career education and economic education. At grade eleven, student mastery percentages in districts having fewer than 1,000 ADA were significantly below statewide results on eight of nine categories. While

these students were the lowest performers for grade eleven, students in urban districts were the lowest performers in grade eight. Numerous school districts addressed this SBOE priority via projects funded locally in addition to those funded by the Career Education Incentive Act (PL 95-207). In 1979-80 thirteen Education Service Centers (ESCs) operated career education cooperatives serving 229 small/rural school districts.

Support Units as Provided by SB 350

The Sixty-sixth Texas Legislature guaranteed minimum personnel unit allocations to districts with 1,000 or fewer students. In addition, .6 personnel units were allotted each of these districts to be used cooperatively with other districts to provide support services necessary to meet accreditation standards. As a result of these support units, 607 school districts have the services of instructional supervisors, counselors, librarians, etc. which they otherwise would not have. The eligible school districts, in cooperation with the respective Education Service Centers, determined the need for the various types of support units. Table I (attached) summarizes the number and type of support units, Education Service Center (ESC) region number, and number of school districts served by these support units.

Programs for the Gifted and Talented

Talented Youth Seminars

One approach to overcoming problems of small/rural schools in providing challenging and enriching experiences for gifted and talented secondary students is through the Talented Youth Seminars sponsored by the Community Schools Project. These cooperatively planned Seminars are designed to provide intellectual stimulation and challenge for

talented juniors and seniors. The Seminars are usually conducted on a college campus and are under the direction of guidance oriented coordinators. In 1979-80 eight such Seminars served approximately 75 school districts. These Seminars were conducted at:

South Plains College	Grayson County Junior College
Tarleton State University	Sam Houston State University
Texas A&M University	University of Texas at Tyler
Blinn College	Utopia ISD

Seminar expenses, if any, are borne by the participating school districts and host institutions.

State Funded Programs

State funded programs in small/rural schools and ESCs for the gifted and talented (G/T) in 1979-80 were:

- Coahoma ISD

  This program served 69 students in grades K-8. The G/T areas were general intellectual ability, specific subject matter aptitude, creative and productive thinking, and leadership.

- Region X ESC co-op (30 small/rural ISDs)

  This program served 463 students in grades 9-12. The G/T area is leadership.

- Region XII ESC co-op (9 school districts, 4 of which have fewer than 1,000 ADA)

  This program served a total of 427 students in grades 1-8. The G/T area is general intellectual ability.

- Region XVI ESC co-op (9 school districts, 4 of which have fewer than 1,000 ADA)

  This program served a total of 661 students in grades K-8. The G/T areas are general intellectual

ability, specific subject matter aptitude, creative and productive thinking, and leadership.

- Region XIX ESC co-op (9 school districts, 6 of which have fewer than 1,000 ADA)

  This program served a total of 480 students in grades K-12. The G/T areas are general intellectual ability, specific subject matter aptitude, creative and productive thinking, and leadership.

- Boys Ranch ISD

  This program served 20 students in grade K-12. The G/T areas are general intellectual ability and specific subject matter aptitude.

Gifted and talented program grants were awarded on a competitive basis. Funded programs were awarded amounts of $150 per pupil served, not to exceed 5% of the total number of students in the grade(s) or G/T area(s) served. Table II (attached) summarizes the state funding of exemplary programs for the gifted and talented.

Occupational Education and Technology

Many districts with a relatively small enrollment find that a greater variety of occupational education opportunities can be made available to students by contracting for necessary courses with other districts, public and private post-secondary institutions, and trade or technical schools. This kind of contracting was authorized by the Sixty-first and Sixty-second Texas Legislatures. In 1979-80 204 school districts sent students to 86 other institutions to receive such services.

Other programs which were initiated by ISDs, ESCs, or junior or senior colleges or universities, were approved and funded on an individual basis. These programs provided services to a small/rural district or districts in a particular geographical area.

Funded projects that directly affected small/rural schools in

1979-80 were:

- A Multi-Activity Approach in Career and Occupational Education Grades 7-12. Little Elm ISD.

  Students in grades 7-12 explored industrial related careers through a series of graduated individual learning activities.

- Learning With Tools: An Orientation and Exploration Program for Handicapped Students in the Cluster of Construction Trades, Personal Services, and Transportation. Meridian ISD - Multi-County Special Services Cooperative (serving 18 school districts).

  Students became familiar with and explored vocational opportunities through hands-on experience. A model curriculum, a list of occupations in which handicapped persons can succeed, as well as tools and equipment lists, were also developed.

- Occupational Opportunity Enhancement Project for Special Populations. Education Service Center, Region VIII (Mt. Pleasant).

  (Schools served first were those without counselors and those with a high percentage of handicapped and disadvantaged students).

  An ESC consultant provided services to students to broaden occupational aspirations.

- Training in Vocational Assessment for the Handicapped. Education Service Center, Region IX (Wichita Falls). (All school districts in region).

  Training was provided in all phases of vocational assessment.

- A Proto-Type Occupational Choice Model for Disadvantaged Youths in Rural Schools. Community Affairs Center of Prairie View A&M University. (Two rural school districts).

  A model rural guidance program was developed.

- The Delivery of a Foundry Production Curriculum to Rural School Districts in East Texas Through a Mobile Foundry Laboratory. The Department of Industrial Education at Texas A&M University. (55 rural ISDs).

  Through use of the Mobile Foundry Laboratory rural schools offering industrial arts had an opportunity to provide hands-on experience for students in foundry techniques.

- Career and Occupational Orientation and Exploration. South Plains College (Levelland). (20 area schools).

  A Career Resource Center was established. Workshops on employability skills were held.

- Vocational Placement (Multi-District). Education Service Center, Region VIII (Mt. Pleasant). (13 small ISDs).

  A job placement office and follow-up service operated at the ESC for 13 small districts without benefit of such service.

- Systematic Approach for the Cooperative Delivery of Support Services for Students. Education Service Center, Region XI (Ft. Worth). (12 ISDs not having counselors).

  This program provided vocational guidance services to small schools.

- Project ANGORA - Applying New Guidance Opportunities in Rural Areas. Education Service Center, Region XIII (Austin).

  This program provided vocational guidance service to small schools.

- Project BEST - Building Employability Skills in Teenagers. Education Service Center, Region XIV (Abilene). (22 small/rural schools).

  Vocational counselors provided a variety of services, including workshops on job availability, job seeking skills, and out of school survival skills.

Title IV-C

Title IV-C grants were awarded on a competitive basis to school districts and ESCs to adopt/adapt, develop, or continue innovative educational programs. Table III (attached) summarizes the funding of Title IV-C proposals for 1979-80. The proposals funded from small/rural schools were:

School District	Priority Area
Crandall	2 Proposals Funded - 1 in Mathematics 1 in Citizenship

Ganado	Citizenship
Queen City	Reading
Rocksprings	Reading
San Elizario	Mathematics
Texas School for the Deaf	Hearing

Education Service Centers also received Title IV-C funding in 1979-80. Of the 94 ESC proposals funded, many were designed as cooperative arrangements for the small/rural schools. It appears the following programs in the curriculum areas benefit most districts in the regions.

Priority Area	No. of Proposals Funded
Reading	37
Math	34
Citizenship	9
Gifted/Talented	5
Writing (Composition)	6
Social Studies	2
Health/Physical Education	1
TOTAL	94

The 94 proposals indicated above are included in the data exhibited in Table III.

Miscellaneous

Numerous other curriculum development activities may be found in the small/rural schools. Illustrative of these are those described in detail in the 1978-80 Visitors Guide: Demonstration Schools in Individualized Instruction (TEA Bulletin GE 9 402 02). Among these are:

School District	Priority Area
Hawkins	Language Arts, K-6
Holliday	Special Education, 1-6
Iowa Park	Special Education, 1-4
Wildorado	All Subjects, K-6
Plains	All Subjects, 9-12 (Resource Center)
Forsan	Occupational Orientation, 9-12 (Industrial Arts)
Granbury	Physical Education, 1-4

Conclusion

A perennial problem of small/rural schools is the tendency to offer a more limited curriculum than larger metropolitan schools. This is due primarily to smaller enrollments and, in some cases, the geographic isolation of the community. In addition to the more narrow range of course offerings, results of the Texas Assessment Project indicate that students from small/rural and urban schools performed less well than their suburban counterparts in the areas of reading, writing (composition), mathematics, citizenship, and career education.

Curriculum limitations in small/rural schools can be minimized through multi-district arrangements (cooperatives) and imaginative teaching strategies. More small/rural districts than ever before are utilizing support services personnel (counselors, librarians, etc.) as a result of SB 350. While larger districts have a tendency to submit more proposals for federal and state funds than small/rural districts, there are several outstanding funded projects in the small/rural schools in the areas of vocational education, Title IV-C, and the gifted and talented. Most of

the programs mentioned in this paper represent special efforts by persons concerned with the programs in small/rural school districts and knowledgeable of circumstances there: TEA, ESCs, colleges or universities, and administrators from some small/rural schools.

( ) = Districts Served

TABLE I
SUMMARY REPORT OF NUMBER OF SUPPORT SERVICE CO-OP PU'S APPROVED
1979-80

REGION #	TOTAL P U'S	NURSE	NURSES AIDE	COUNSELOR	LIBRARIAN	LIBRARIAN AIDE	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISOR	TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS	OTHER	TOTAL # DISTRICTS	TOTAL ELIGIBLE DISTRICTS
1.	6.6			1.2(2)	1.0(2)		2.2(9)	2.2(9)		11	11
2.	8.5	1.0(2)		2.4(4)	1.0(3)	1.7(3)	1.4(15)	1.0(5)		15	15
3.	11.8				1.0(18)	10.8(18)				18	20
4.	3.5	1.1(2)		1.2(2)	.6(1)				Instruct. Aide .6	6	6
5.	4.51	2.11(5)		1.2(2)		1.2(2)				8	9
6.	22.2	1.45(8)		7.2(16)	3.0(7)	9.35(17)	1.2(2)			37	37
7.	31.0	7.0(16)		15.6(29)	6.0(16)		2.4(4)			52	66
8.	18.6	.15(7)	1.65(7)	3.6(9)	1.0(31)	12.10(22)	1.2(2)			31	31
9.	18.0	2.5(7)		4.8(11)	2.7(7)		2.4(4)	1.2(29)		29	34
10.	30.0	5.67(26)		13.28(30)	8.40(25)		2.65(10)			50	50
11.	28.16	6.9(32)	.6(5)	8.76(30)	5.95(22)	5.95(12)				47	47
12.	37.2	7.0(37)		13.2(62)	14.0(62)			1.0(22)	Visiting Teachers 2.11	66	62
13.	16.20	1.0(5)		3.6(8)	4.8(7)	2.8(5)	3.4(6)		Counselor Aide .55(1)	27	27
14.	28.2	7.0(28)		11.8(36)	4.0(17)		2.4(11)	3.0(14)		47	43
15.	23.4	1.0(2)		9.6(23)	5.0(17)	.6(1)	4.8(8)	2.4(39)		39	39
16.	28.0	3.0(13)		3.6(12)	5.0(25)	11.0(20)	3.6(12)	1.2(52)	Aide .6 (9)*	52	52
17.	13.2	1.92(9)		5.22(12)	2.32(7)		3.67(6)		Visiting Teacher 1.07(5)	22	41
18.	12.[illegible]	2.0(6)		6.0(12)			2.4(22)	2.4(22)		22	21
19.	3.6			1.2(6)			2.4(6)			6	7
20.	13.20	1.83(6)	.37(1)	4.08(9)	4.0(13)	2.85(6)		.07(22)		22	22
Total	358.07	52.63	2.62	117.54	69.77	58.35	36.12	14.47	4.93	607	640

* Nine school districts chose to contract for all services on an as-needed basis rather than specific services on a regular basis.

TABLE II

Summary of Exemplary Programs for the Gifted and Talented

1979-80

Total Number of Proposals Submitted		Total Number of Proposals Funded		Number of Proposals Submitted from	Number of Proposals Funded from
ISDs[1]	ESCs	ISDs[2]	ESCs	Small/Rural ISDs	Small/Rural ISDs
119	12	55	7	13 (including 1 co-op, [not an ESC] of 18 small/rural schools)	2

[1]Includes the number of proposals submitted from small/rural ISDs.

[2]Includes the number of proposals funded from small/rural ISDs.

TABLE III

Summary of Title IV-C Proposals
1979-80

Type of Proposal	No. Submitted ISDs[1]	No. Submitted ESCs	No. Funded ISDs[2]	No. Funded ESCs	No. Submitted from Small/Rural ISDs	No. Funded from Small/Rural ISDs
Adopter/Adapter	35	74	30	65	5	4
Developmental	98	124	12	23	14	1
Continuation	37	52	31	47	5	2
TOTAL	170	250	73	135	24	7

[1]Includes the number of proposals submitted from small/rural ISDs.

[2]Includes the number of proposals funded from small/rural ISDs.